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SUBJECT: THE POLITICS OF CANADA'S DARFUR INVOLVEMENT

Classified By: POLMINCOUNS Brian Flora 1.4 (b) (d)

¶11. (C/NF) Summary: In an effort to shore up support for his tottering minority government, PM Martin gave in to the demands of independent MP David Kilgour and accelerated the announcement of a major increase in aid for Darfur, to include CN \$200 million and up to Canadian Forces technical advisors in support of the AU mission. In its rush to announce the package, however, the GOC may have neglected to coordinate with the Government of Sudan and is now trying to unruffle Khartoum's feathers. Kilgour, meanwhile, considers the package inadequate, and it may have even affirmed his reasons for leaving the Liberal Party to begin with, which were expressed at the time as frustration with Liberal half-steps on important issues like Sudan. We are told by senior PCO officials that even if the government falls on Thursday, initiatives like this that have the cabinet's blessing are expected to go forward with funding from the normal operating budgets of the respective ministries. End Summary

CANADIAN SUPPORT FOR SUDAN

¶12. (C/NF) PM Martin announced May 12 that Canada would significantly increase its support for international efforts to bring peace and stability to Darfur. Included in the package was CN \$170 million in military and technical assistance to help the African Union to fulfill its mandate, CN \$28 million of the CN \$90 million announced at the April 2005 Oslo Donors' Conference for humanitarian and peace support in Darfur and Chad through UN agencies, and enhanced diplomatic support for the AU-led mission. The mission would also include up to 60 military technical advisors to support the AU force in non-combat roles. Senior members of the Privy Council Office (protect) affirm that the government likely would coordinate subsequent military contributions under a NATO umbrella, if or when NATO is able to decide on assistance to the AU. They also expect the Prime Minister to publicly support activities coordinated by NATO.

WOOING THE INDEPENDENTS

¶13. (C/NF) While no one doubts that Sudan has been on the PM's mind for a long time, the announcement was, like most of the recent funding initiatives, geared very directly to the survival of the government. Former Liberal and now independent MP David Kilgour transparently tied his support for the government in the upcoming no-confidence motion, to whether PM Martin would agree to make a significant effort to stop the genocide in Darfur. PM Martin's government would need the support of all three independent MPs to survive, so Kilgour's vote is essential. But Kilgour has argued in print that the package does not go far enough. In an op-ed that ran Saturday in the National Post, Kilgour said that the aid announcement was welcome, "but unfortunately it largely missed the key point -- to put an immediate end to the ongoing violence across the Sudanese region." For this, Kilgour said, quoting an estimate of Senator Romero Dallaire, "there is a need for 40,000 peacekeepers." He criticized the PM's paltry offering, saying "PM Martin's commitment of no more than 100 peacekeepers for Darfur is anything but leadership." Kilgour is also quoted by the Globe and Mail's Hugh Winsor as saying "I'm hoping against hope that Martin will do the right thing and live up to the Pearsonian tradition that we all espoused and the world expects of us. But if the Prime Minister is going to wimp out, then I have lost all faith in him."

LACK OF COORDINATION WITH SUDAN

¶14. (SBU) Piling on to the GOC's lack of support from Mr. Kilgour were a series of statements over the weekend by Sudanese Ambassador to Canada Faiza Hassan Taha. Taha told reporters that "this plan has never been consulted or negotiated with the government of Sudan," and while she suggested that the Government of Sudan welcomed the provision of aid, also said it firmly objected to non-African soldiers in Darfur. "We are not going to refuse any help which we

think we need. But we want to be there, in the picture, to participate fully as a government. This is an agreement between the African Union and Sudan. The African Union should be given the chance and should be given the opportunity to develop its own capacity in dealing with African problems." She reiterated that the 60 Canadian military advisors should not be sent to Darfur, much less the 500 or so that Mr. Kilgour was suggesting.

15. (SBU) FAC issued a press release on May 13 which confirmed that Canada remains in close and constant contact with the AU and the Government of Sudan with respect to its engagements in Darfur. A senior FAC official said that the issue was one of coordination with the Government of Sudan and the Canadian government would take the appropriate measures to ensure that the aid was properly administered. Foreign Affairs Opposition critic Stockwell Day queried the FM and DefMin on the question of coordination with Sudan and asked about a report that the military advisors would be unarmed in Question Period May 16. FM Pettigrew responded that FM Martin had personally spoken with Sudanese President Bashir on May 11, and that Canada has made full coordination of its assistance package with the UN, the United States, and NATO HQ. Defense Minister Graham reminded Mr. Day that he had been in a committee meeting that morning when General Hillier told the MPs that he had been in the region recently and was well aware of what the African Union needs and the Canadian forces would only be there to provide back-up and support to the AU force. He said the Canadian soldiers would have the proper protection for the tasks that they would be performing.

CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT COMING?

16. (C/NF) Looming over the Darfur operation of course, is the fact that the government could fall on May 19, if it loses the no-confidence vote over the budget. PolMilCouns queried Tony Burger (protect), a senior foreign policy advisor at the Privy Council about what this would mean for Canada's support for Darfur. Burger said the Darfur aid package was approved by the cabinet so it can be funded with current monies in advance of passage of the new budget. In the event the government falls, Burger said, the aid package could still go forward with funding from the various ministry's normal operating budgets. He acknowledged that there had been problems with the Government of Sudan over the package, but said that Canada was working through the AU to resolve them.

17. (C/NF) Comment: As the Globe's Hugh Winsor put it, "only in Canada could the fate of the Paul Martin government be riding on a rebellion and refugee crisis in a bereft region of Africa that many Canadians have never heard of." Such, though, is the strange nature of minority government, especially one whose survival hangs by such a narrow margin. And yet ironically, it was the difficulty of getting things done in a minority government that probably stopped Martin from doing more for Sudan earlier. It is the most obvious place to test his "responsibility to protect" doctrine, which is at the centerpiece of the PM's foreign policy. Like much of the spending that is ongoing, Kilgour gave the PM the opportunity to do something he would like to do anyway. We agree with the PCO that independent of how the vote goes on Thursday, some increase in support for Darfur will survive -- the Conservatives have been pushing the government to do more for Darfur for over a year. But there is also no question that many programs would be scaled back or delayed until after the elections as the new government sorts itself out. The initiation of a high-risk peacekeeping mission would be an obvious place for caution and delay.

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